
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6778

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Shin, Kauffman, and Kline)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/10.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing an alternative route to a high
2 school diploma; amending RCW 28A.230.120, 28A.655.061, 28A.655.0611,
3 and 28A.155.045; reenacting and amending RCW 28A.230.090; adding a new
4 section to chapter 28A.230 RCW; and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the higher
7 education coordinating board has established minimum standards for
8 admission to a public four-year institution of higher education in
9 Washington. The legislature further finds that, with only minor
10 supplementation, all of the four-year institutions rely on these
11 standards when it comes to minimum requirements for admission.
12 Therefore, if the state's four-year colleges and universities consider
13 the standards adopted by the higher education coordinating board to be
14 sufficiently rigorous for admission, the legislature finds that
15 students who can meet and exceed these standards should qualify for a
16 high school diploma.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230
18 RCW to read as follows:

1 As an alternative to the high school graduation requirements
2 established under RCW 28A.230.090 and 28A.655.061, and any additional
3 local graduation requirements established by school districts, any
4 student who meets the following requirements shall receive a high
5 school diploma:

6 (1) Successfully completes the minimum credits for admission to a
7 public four-year institution of higher education adopted by the higher
8 education coordinating board under RCW 28B.76.290, which includes
9 meeting the required college academic distribution requirements;

10 (2) Earns a cumulative average grade of at least a three on a four-
11 point scale, as determined by the school district, for the courses
12 required under subsection (1) of this section; and

13 (3) Completes a culminating project and a high school and beyond
14 plan according to rules adopted by the state board of education.

15 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2009 c 548 s 111 and 2009 c 223 s 2
16 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

17 (1) Except as provided in section 2 of this act, the state board of
18 education shall establish high school graduation requirements or
19 equivalencies for students, except those equivalencies established by
20 local high schools or school districts under RCW 28A.230.097. The
21 purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready
22 for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
23 citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

24 (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to
25 fulfill high school graduation requirements shall consider including
26 information on the culture, history, and government of the American
27 Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

28 (b) Except for students meeting the requirements of section 2 of
29 this act, the certificate of academic achievement requirements under
30 RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement
31 requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a
32 public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation.

33 (c) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's
34 high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan
35 shall remain at the local level.

36 (2)(a) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board
37 of education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation

1 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the
2 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the
3 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board.

4 (b) The state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements
5 for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and
6 technical education programs, particularly those programs that lead to
7 a certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized.
8 The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in
9 these programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of
10 academic achievement, complete the program and earn the program's
11 certificate or credential, and complete other state and local
12 graduation requirements.

13 (c) The state board shall forward any proposed changes to the high
14 school graduation requirements to the education committees of the
15 legislature for review and to the quality education council established
16 under RCW 28A.290.010. The legislature shall have the opportunity to
17 act during a regular legislative session before the changes are adopted
18 through administrative rule by the state board. Changes that have a
19 fiscal impact on school districts, as identified by a fiscal analysis
20 prepared by the office of the superintendent of public instruction,
21 shall take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the
22 legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted
23 legislation.

24 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other
25 than English established by the state board of education or a local
26 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,
27 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or
28 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied
29 the state or local school district graduation requirement for
30 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

31 (4) If requested by the student and his or her family, a student
32 who has completed high school courses before attending high school
33 shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling
34 high school graduation requirements if:

35 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic
36 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth
37 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing

1 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school
2 students enrolled in the class; or

3 (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for
4 seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high
5 school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course
6 offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school
7 district board of directors.

8 (5) Students who have taken and successfully completed high school
9 courses under the circumstances in subsection (4) of this section shall
10 not be required to take an additional competency examination or perform
11 any other additional assignment to receive credit.

12 (6) At the college or university level, five quarter or three
13 semester hours equals one high school credit.

14 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.230.120 and 2008 c 185 s 1 are each amended to
15 read as follows:

16 (1) School districts shall issue diplomas to students signifying
17 graduation from high school upon the students' satisfactory completion
18 of all local and state graduation requirements or upon completion of
19 the requirements in section 2 of this act. Districts shall grant
20 students the option of receiving a final transcript in addition to the
21 regular diploma.

22 (2) School districts or schools of attendance shall establish
23 policies and procedures to notify senior students of the transcript
24 option and shall direct students to indicate their decisions in a
25 timely manner. School districts shall make appropriate provisions to
26 assure that students who choose to receive a copy of their final
27 transcript shall receive such transcript after graduation.

28 (3)(a) A school district may issue a high school diploma to a
29 person who:

30 (i) Is an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the
31 United States; and

32 (ii) Left high school before graduation to serve in World War II,
33 the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam era as defined in RCW 41.04.005.

34 (b) A school district may issue a diploma to or on behalf of a
35 person otherwise eligible under (a) of this subsection notwithstanding
36 the fact that the person holds a high school equivalency certification
37 or is deceased.

1 (c) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt a form for
2 a diploma application to be used by a veteran or a person acting on
3 behalf of a deceased veteran under this subsection (3). The
4 superintendent of public instruction shall specify what constitutes
5 acceptable evidence of eligibility for a diploma.

6 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2009 c 524 s 5 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 (1) The high school assessment system shall include but need not be
9 limited to the Washington assessment of student learning, opportunities
10 for a student to retake the content areas of the assessment in which
11 the student was not successful, and if approved by the legislature
12 pursuant to subsection (10) of this section, one or more objective
13 alternative assessments for a student to demonstrate achievement of
14 state academic standards. The objective alternative assessments for
15 each content area shall be comparable in rigor to the skills and
16 knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the Washington
17 assessment of student learning for each content area.

18 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of
19 academic achievement shall be obtained by most students at about the
20 age of sixteen, and is evidence that the students have successfully met
21 the state standard in the content areas included in the certificate.
22 With the exception of students satisfying the provisions of RCW
23 28A.155.045 (~~(e)~~), 28A.655.0611, or section 2 of this act, acquisition
24 of the certificate is required for graduation from a public high school
25 but is not the only requirement for graduation.

26 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception
27 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who
28 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics
29 content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student
30 learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a
31 student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more
32 content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement,
33 then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to
34 four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully
35 meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the
36 student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once
37 objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection

1 (10) of this section, a student may use the objective alternative
2 assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully meets the
3 state standards for that content area if the student has taken the
4 Washington assessment of student learning at least once. If the
5 student successfully meets the state standards on the objective
6 alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of
7 academic achievement.

8 (4) Beginning no later than with the graduating class of 2013, a
9 student must meet the state standards in science in addition to the
10 other content areas required under subsection (3) of this section on
11 the Washington assessment of student learning or the objective
12 alternative assessments in order to earn a certificate of academic
13 achievement. The state board of education may adopt a rule that
14 implements the requirements of this subsection (4) beginning with a
15 graduating class before the graduating class of 2013, if the state
16 board of education adopts the rule by September 1st of the freshman
17 school year of the graduating class to which the requirements of this
18 subsection (4) apply. The state board of education's authority under
19 this subsection (4) does not alter the requirement that any change in
20 performance standards for the tenth grade assessment must comply with
21 RCW 28A.305.130.

22 (5) The state board of education may not require the acquisition of
23 the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based
24 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private
25 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the
26 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

27 (6) A student may retain and use the highest result from each
28 successfully completed content area of the high school assessment.

29 (7) School districts must make available to students the following
30 options:

31 (a) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
32 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
33 state standards if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

34 (b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
35 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
36 state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion
37 program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of

1 public instruction and the state board for community and technical
2 colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these
3 programs can be assessed.

4 (8) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of the high
5 school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall pay for
6 retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the
7 superintendent of public instruction.

8 (9) Opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice a year
9 shall be available to each school district.

10 (10)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
11 shall develop options for implementing objective alternative
12 assessments, which may include an appeals process for students' scores,
13 for students to demonstrate achievement of the state academic
14 standards. The objective alternative assessments shall be comparable
15 in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate
16 on the Washington assessment of student learning and be objective in
17 its determination of student achievement of the state standards.
18 Before any objective alternative assessments in addition to those
19 authorized in RCW 28A.655.065 or (b) of this subsection are used by a
20 student to demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in
21 a content area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall
22 formally approve the use of any objective alternative assessments
23 through the omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent
24 resolution.

25 (b)(i) A student's score on the mathematics, reading or English, or
26 writing portion of the SAT or the ACT may be used as an objective
27 alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a
28 student has met or exceeded the state standards for the certificate of
29 academic achievement. The state board of education shall identify the
30 scores students must achieve on the relevant portion of the SAT or ACT
31 to meet or exceed the state standard in the relevant content area on
32 the Washington assessment of student learning. The state board of
33 education shall identify the first scores by December 1, 2007. After
34 the first scores are established, the state board may increase but not
35 decrease the scores required for students to meet or exceed the state
36 standards.

37 (ii) Until August 31, 2008, a student's score on the mathematics
38 portion of the PSAT may be used as an objective alternative assessment

1 under this section for demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded
2 the state standard for the certificate of academic achievement. The
3 state board of education shall identify the score students must achieve
4 on the mathematics portion of the PSAT to meet or exceed the state
5 standard in that content area on the Washington assessment of student
6 learning.

7 (iii) A student who scores at least a three on the grading scale of
8 one to five for selected AP examinations may use the score as an
9 objective alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating
10 that a student has met or exceeded state standards for the certificate
11 of academic achievement. A score of three on the AP examinations in
12 calculus or statistics may be used as an alternative assessment for the
13 mathematics portion of the Washington assessment of student learning.
14 A score of three on the AP examinations in English language and
15 composition may be used as an alternative assessment for the writing
16 portion of the Washington assessment of student learning. A score of
17 three on the AP examinations in English literature and composition,
18 macroeconomics, microeconomics, psychology, United States history,
19 world history, United States government and politics, or comparative
20 government and politics may be used as an alternative assessment for
21 the reading portion of the Washington assessment of student learning.

22 (11) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and senate
23 education committees shall obtain information and conclusions from
24 recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the
25 validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of
26 student learning for making individual student high school graduation
27 determinations.

28 (12) To help assure continued progress in academic achievement as
29 a foundation for high school graduation and to assure that students are
30 on track for high school graduation, each school district shall prepare
31 plans for and notify students and their parents or legal guardians as
32 provided in this subsection (12).

33 (a) Student learning plans are required for eighth through twelfth
34 grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content
35 areas of the Washington assessment for student learning during the
36 previous school year or who may not be on track to graduate due to
37 credit deficiencies or absences. The parent or legal guardian shall be
38 notified about the information in the student learning plan, preferably

1 through a parent conference and at least annually. To the extent
2 feasible, schools serving English language learner students and their
3 parents shall translate the plan into the primary language of the
4 family. The plan shall include the following information as
5 applicable:

6 (i) The student's results on the Washington assessment of student
7 learning;

8 (ii) If the student is in the transitional bilingual program, the
9 score on his or her Washington language proficiency test II;

10 (iii) Any credit deficiencies;

11 (iv) The student's attendance rates over the previous two years;

12 (v) The student's progress toward meeting state and local
13 graduation requirements;

14 (vi) The courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken
15 by the student to meet state academic standards and stay on track for
16 graduation;

17 (vii) Remediation strategies and alternative education options
18 available to students, including informing students of the option to
19 continue to receive instructional services after grade twelve or until
20 the age of twenty-one;

21 (viii) The alternative assessment options available to students
22 under this section and RCW 28A.655.065;

23 (ix) School district programs, high school courses, and career and
24 technical education options available for students to meet graduation
25 requirements; and

26 (x) Available programs offered through skill centers or community
27 and technical colleges, including the college high school diploma
28 options under RCW 28B.50.535.

29 (b) All fifth grade students who were not successful in one or more
30 of the content areas of the fourth grade Washington assessment of
31 student learning shall have a student learning plan.

32 (i) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified,
33 preferably through a parent conference, of the student's results on the
34 Washington assessment of student learning, actions the school intends
35 to take to improve the student's skills in any content area in which
36 the student was unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them
37 improve their student's skills.

1 (ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the
2 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the
3 plan made as necessary.

4 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28A.655.0611 and 2009 c 17 s 1 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008 and through no
7 later than the graduating class of 2012, students may graduate from
8 high school without earning a certificate of academic achievement or a
9 certificate of individual achievement if they:

10 (a) Have not successfully met the mathematics standard on the high
11 school Washington assessment of student learning, an approved objective
12 alternative assessment, or an alternate assessment developed for
13 eligible special education students;

14 (b) Have successfully met the state standard in the other content
15 areas required for a certificate under RCW 28A.655.061 or 28A.155.045;

16 (c) Have met all other state and school district graduation
17 requirements; and

18 (d)(i) For the graduating class of 2008, successfully earn one high
19 school mathematics credit or career and technical course equivalent,
20 including courses offered at skill centers, after the student's
21 eleventh grade year intended to increase the student's mathematics
22 proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the mathematics standards
23 assessed on the high school Washington assessment of student learning;
24 and

25 (ii) For the remaining graduating classes under this section,
26 successfully earn two mathematics credits or career and technical
27 course equivalent, including courses offered at skill centers, after
28 the student's tenth grade year intended to increase the student's
29 mathematics proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the mathematics
30 standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment of student
31 learning.

32 (2) The state board of education may adopt a rule that ends the
33 application of this section with a graduating class before the
34 graduating class of 2012, if the state board of education adopts the
35 rule by September 1st of the freshman school year of the graduating
36 class to which the provisions of this section no longer apply. The

1 state board of education's authority under this section does not alter
2 the requirement that any change in performance standards for the tenth
3 grade assessment must comply with RCW 28A.305.130.

4 (3) This section does not apply to students who meet the
5 requirements of section 2 of this act.

6 (4) This section expires August 31, 2013.

7 **Sec. 7.** RCW 28A.155.045 and 2007 c 354 s 3 are each amended to
8 read as follows:

9 Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students served under
10 this chapter, who are not appropriately assessed by the high school
11 Washington assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061, even with
12 accommodations, may earn a certificate of individual achievement. The
13 certificate may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and
14 abilities commensurate with their individual education programs. The
15 determination of whether the high school assessment system is
16 appropriate shall be made by the student's individual education program
17 team. Except as provided in RCW 28A.655.0611 and section 2 of this
18 act, for these students, the certificate of individual achievement is
19 required for graduation from a public high school, but need not be the
20 only requirement for graduation. When measures other than the high
21 school assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used, the
22 measures shall be in agreement with the appropriate educational
23 opportunity provided for the student as required by this chapter. The
24 superintendent of public instruction shall develop the guidelines for
25 determining which students should not be required to participate in the
26 high school assessment system and which types of assessments are
27 appropriate to use.

28 When measures other than the high school assessment system as
29 defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used for high school graduation
30 purposes, the student's high school transcript shall note whether that
31 student has earned a certificate of individual achievement.

32 Nothing in this section shall be construed to deny a student the
33 right to participation in the high school assessment system as defined
34 in RCW 28A.655.061, and, upon successfully meeting the high school
35 standard, receipt of the certificate of academic achievement.

--- END ---